

27th Session of the Human Rights Council

Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the SUDAN

Statement by the Czech Republic

23rd September 2014

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic supports the statement delivered by the European Union.

The human rights situation in the Sudan remains of serious concern. We thank the Independent Expert for his recent report. We appreciate his cooperation with the Government of the Sudan and especially the formal granting of access to the entire country including the States of Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. However, we regret that several travel authorizations were not granted.

We welcome the establishment of the National Dialogue which has a potential to pave the way towards internal peace, reconciliation and democratic governance. The Dialogue must include armed and unarmed opposition, as well as civil society.

The human rights situation remains worrying especially in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur. We condemn aerial bombings, killings of civilians, rampaging of villages, destruction of property, sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by government forces, particularly by the Rapid Support Force, as well by rebel movements.

The Czech Republic welcomes renewing of the mandate of the Independent Expert, which, in our view, should contain the element of monitoring and reporting on the situation of human rights. We invite the new Independent Expert to focus on preparations for the Sudan's general elections planned for April 2015; all citizens including internally displaced persons should be allowed to enjoy their right to choose representatives in governance bodies and to stand for public office in elections conducted in accordance with the international democratic standards.

We further call on the Government of the Sudan to cooperate with local civil society organizations and respect their freedoms of expression and assembly. Regrettably, the Government restricts space for civil society and as stated in the report of the Independent Expert: *"Government's curtailment of local civil society organizations activities remains a matter of serious concern"*.

In his report, the Independent Expert recommends to civil society organizations in the Sudan to continue their engagements with the Government. *We would therefore like to ask the Independent Expert about the real chances to establish mutual cooperation in the situation of harassment of civil society organizations' representatives?*

Thank you.